

## DENIM AND DENIM-LIKE FABRIC LOOKS ALL SEWN UP!

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Denim is popular today for all types of garments from work clothes to evening attire. The name originally described fabric made from woven cotton, but has been expanded to include cotton/polyester blends, cotton with elastic yarns, polyester knit, and other synthetics which look like denim. Indigo-blue is the signature of denim, but it can appear in an array of colors and printed designs.

Denim is available in many different weights, from heavy woven fabrics for jeans and jackets to light weight fabrics for sportswear. Knits are available in heavy polyester double knit for sportswear to lightweight look-like denims for dresses and shirts. Woven denim often has a permanent press finish.

### Pattern Selection

Pattern selection is almost unlimited. The pattern may include construction details traditional to denim such as topstitching and flat-felled seams or welt seams. Patch pockets are a traditional denim technique.

### Preparation

Denim is easy to cut, sew and press and requires no special equipment. Woven denim has a one-way right hand twill which requires the pattern pieces to be laid out in one direction. This means using a "with nap" layout and yardage.

### Construction

Use cotton or cotton/polyester thread when sewing woven denim. Polyester or cotton/polyester thread is best for knitted denim. Use heavy thread (size 40 to 50) and a size 16 needle for sewing

heavy woven denim. A ball-point needle for knits helps prevent snags and skipped stitches. Heavy denim usually requires a heavy pressure on the presser foot. You may have to loosen the tension on the sewing machine for thick fabrics. Lightweight look-like denims use size 50 to 60 thread, size 11 or 14 needle and regular pressure and tension. Test both on a scrap of fabric before starting to sew. Interfacing may be necessary on lightweight fabrics.



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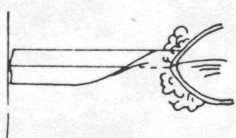
## Seams

To topstitch seams stitch a plain seam, then press seams to one side. Top stitch the desired distance from the seam on the right side of the fabric through all thicknesses. The stitching can be done after the garment is completed, but it is easier to stitch individual pieces or a large area during construction.

Topstitching can be easy if these hints are followed. Use buttonhole twist or two spools of regular thread if you prefer conspicuous topstitching. Use a size 16 needle to allow the thread to feed through the eye of the needle without breaking or fraying. Stitch carefully using a guide or the commercial tapes for topstitching if needed. Double or triple needles, zig-zag or decorative machine stitches may be used for a decorative finish.

The flat-felled seam is often featured on sportswear. Most seams can be finished by this method, but the armhole seam can be flat-felled only if it has a very shallow sleeve cap and no ease (such as a shirt sleeve).

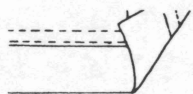
To flat-fell a seam stitch with wrong sides together. Press the seam open, repress with both seam allowances turned in the same direction.



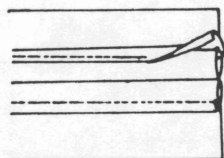
Trim the bottom seam allowance to  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch. Fold the other seam allowance to  $\frac{1}{2}$  its width and place over the narrow seam allowance.



Edge stitch fold to garment.



The seams of an unlined jacket or coat may be bound for a finished look. Encase the edge of each seam allowance in purchased double-fold bias tape. Place the narrow edge of the tape on top and edge-stitch.

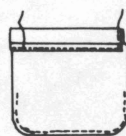


To fray the edges of a double stitched seam for a special feature do not turn the raw edge under on the last step of the flat-felled seam. Simply make 2 rows of stitching and unravel the raw edge for the frayed look.



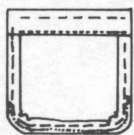
## Patch Pockets

Turn in raw, top edge of the pocket section  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch to the wrong side and stitch close to the fold. Fold the hem to the right side on the fold line, as indicated on the pattern. Stitch ends and trim as shown. Ease-stitch the rounded area  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch from the seamline on the seam allowance to get a flat finish.

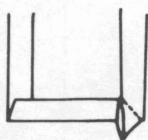




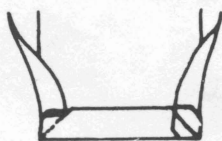
Pull in the ease-stitches. Turn both the hem and the seam allowance to the inside. Baste around the edges, notching away the excess fullness. Press.



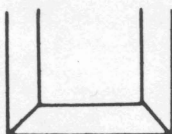
If the pocket is square, miter the corners. Turn all seam allowances to the right side. Make a diagonal fold in the turned back seam allowances at the corners and press. Stitch along the pressed diagonal crease.



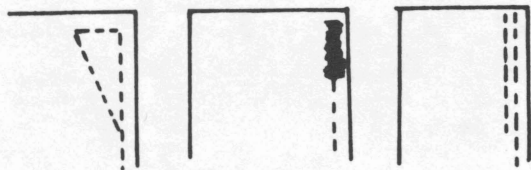
Trim the seam to  $\frac{3}{8}$ " or less for bulky fabrics. Press diagonal seam open.



Turn the corners to the inside. Press.



Baste the pocket to the garment; topstitch with one or two rows along the edges. To reinforce the top corners, stitch a triangle, make a close zigzag stitch about  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch wide for  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch or back stitch for about  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch.



## Hems

Since woven denim ravel easily, the best hem finishes are those that cover the raw edges of the

fabric, such as binding, overcasting or zigzagging. Hem knits with a cross-stitch or catch-stitch. Because knits do not ravel the raw edge does not have to be finished.

## For Added Interest

Face hems, collars, cuffs, front bands and pockets with a compatible contrasting print.

Select decorative zippers, colorful sporty buttons, exposed fasteners, decorative or plain gripper snappers.

For accent use trims such as studs, appliques or decorative braids, woven or embroidery, of wide, bright or textured design; ethnic or peasant prints; or suede or leather looks.



## Care

In addition to being adaptable and versatile, denims are usually machine washable and dryable. Follow the recommended care instructions. Flame retardant denim is available in yardage over-the-counter and offers relatively easy care features.

### References

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*American Fabrics and Fashion*, Doric Publishing Co., Inc., New York (1974).

"What is old and blue: indigo," *Clothes*, Prads, Inc., New York (1975).

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